

Issued Date: November 22, 2025

From: Interim Deputy Director Nelson Leese (on behalf of Interim Director Bonnie Glenn)
Office of Police Accountability 

Case Number: 2025OPA-0207

Allegations of Misconduct & Director's Findings

Named Employee #1

- 1. Allegation #1:** 6.220 – Voluntary Contacts, Terry Stops, & Definitions, 6.220-POL-2
Conducting a Terry Stop, 1. Terry Stops are Seizures...
Finding: Not Sustained - Lawful and Proper (Expedited)
 - 2. Allegation #2:** 6.010 Arrests POL 1. Officers Must Have Probable Cause That a Suspect
Committed a Crime in Order to Effect an Arrest
Finding: Not Sustained - Lawful and Proper (Expedited)
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Named Employee #2

- 1. Allegation #1:** 6.220 – Voluntary Contacts, Terry Stops, & Definitions, 6.220-POL-2
Conducting a Terry Stop, 1. Terry Stops are Seizures...
Finding: Not Sustained - Lawful and Proper (Expedited)
 - 2. Allegation #2:** 6.010 Arrests POL 1. Officers Must Have Probable Cause That a Suspect
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This Closed Case Summary (CCS) represents the opinion of the OPA Director regarding the misconduct alleged and therefore sections may be written in the first person.

Executive Summary:

The Complainant alleged Named Employee #1 (NE#1)—a former student officer—and his field training officer, Named Employee #2 (NE#2), stopped him without reasonable suspicion and arrested him without probable cause.

Administrative Note:

This case was approved for Expedited Investigation. That means OPA, with the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) agreement, believed it could issue recommended findings based solely on its intake investigation without interviewing the named employees. As such, OPA did not interview the named employees in this case.

On July 7, 2025, OIG certified OPA's investigation as thorough, timely, and objective.

Summary of the Investigation:

OPA investigated the allegation by reviewing the OPA complaint, computer-aided dispatch call report, incident report, and body-worn video (BWV). OPA also interviewed the Complainant.

Officers, including the named employees, observed the Complainant working on a vehicle with license plates that did not match the make and model of the vehicle, a violation of Seattle Municipal Code 11.22.085. When officers removed the unlawfully displayed license plate, they observed a temporary plate that had been reported stolen. Incident to the Complainant's arrest, officers also discovered suspected narcotics on the Complainant's person.

Analysis and Conclusions:

Named Employee #1 – Allegation #1

6.220 – Voluntary Contacts, Terry Stops, & Definitions, 6.220-POL-2 Conducting a Terry Stop, 1. Terry Stops are Seizures Based Upon Reasonable Suspicion

The Complainant alleged the named employees stopped him without reasonable suspicion.

SPD Policy 6.220-POL-2(2) requires that officers limit a seizure to a reasonable scope. The policy further states that: "Actions that would indicate to a reasonable person that they are being arrested or indefinitely detained may convert a Terry stop into an arrest." SPD Policy 6.220-POL-2(2). The policy provides a list of possible actions that could indicate to a reasonable person that they are being arrested—such as applying handcuffs or using force—but specifies that the occurrence of any one of these would not necessarily convert a Terry stop into an arrest. *See id.* Unless justified by the basis for the original stop, policy requires officers to have "additional articulable justification" to take any of these actions. *Id.*

The named employees observed the Complainant working on a vehicle bearing license plates that did not match the vehicle's make or model. Based on this, they had reasonable suspicion based on articulable facts that criminal activity was afoot (possible stolen vehicle or license plate) and lawfully stopped the Complainant.

Accordingly, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Lawful and Proper (Expedited).

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Lawful and Proper (Expedited)**

Named Employee #1 – Allegation #2

6.010 Arrests POL 1. Officers Must Have Probable Cause That a Suspect Committed a Crime in Order to Effect an Arrest

The Complainant alleged the named employees arrested him without probable cause.

SPD Policy 6.010-POL-1 requires that officers have probable cause to believe that a suspect committed a crime when effectuating an arrest. Stated differently, where an arrest is not supported by probable cause, it violates law and Department policy. Probable cause exists when the facts and circumstances within an officer's knowledge are sufficient in themselves to support a reasonable belief that an offense has been or is being committed. See *State v. Fricks*, 91 Wash.2d 391, 588 P.2d 1328 (1979); *State v. Gluck*, 83 Wash.2d 424, 426–27, 518 P.2d 703 (1974).

Officers had probable cause to arrest the Complainant for violating SMC 11.22.085, itself a gross misdemeanor. However, on removing the unlawful license plate, they further observed a temporary license plate that was listed as stolen. There was probable cause to arrest the Complainant.

Accordingly, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Lawful and Proper (Expedited).

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Lawful and Proper (Expedited)**

Named Employee #2 – Allegation #1

6.220 – Voluntary Contacts, Terry Stops, & Definitions, 6.220-POL-2 Conducting a Terry Stop, 1. Terry Stops are Seizures Based Upon Reasonable Suspicion

For the reasons set forth above at Named Employee #1, Allegation #1, OPA recommends this allegation be Not Sustained – Lawful and Proper (Expedited).

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Lawful and Proper (Expedited)**

Named Employee #2 – Allegation #2

6.010 Arrests POL 1. Officers Must Have Probable Cause That a Suspect Committed a Crime in Order to Effect an Arrest

For the reasons set forth above at Named Employee #1, Allegation #2, OPA recommends this allegation be Not Sustained – Lawful and Proper (Expedited).

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Lawful and Proper (Expedited)**

